



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/623,845	07/22/2003	Yoshiyuki Fujita	26CT-005-DIV	6417

23400 7590 05/27/2004

POSZ & BETHARDS, PLC  
11250 ROGER BACON DRIVE  
SUITE 10  
RESTON, VA 20190

EXAMINER

DUNN, DAVID R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3616

DATE MAILED: 05/27/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/623,845

Applicant(s)

FUJITA ET AL.

Examiner

David Dunn

Art Unit

3616

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 July 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 14-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 14 and 15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 16-20 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 22 July 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - 2) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/953,159.
  - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 7/22/03, 4/08/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### DETAILED ACTION

1. The preliminary amendment filed July 22, 2003 is acknowledged. Claims 1-13 have been canceled and new claims 14-20 are pending.

#### *Priority*

2. Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d). The certified copy has been filed in parent Application No. 09/953,159.

#### *Information Disclosure Statement*

3. The information disclosure statements filed July 22, 2003 and April 8, 2003 are acknowledged. See enclosed IDS forms.

#### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Trojan et al. (5,499,841).

Trojan et al. discloses a steering wheel comprising: a ring (22); a boss (28, etc.; see Figure 3), wherein the airbag apparatus is located (38, 44); a spoke which connects the ring and boss (see Figure 1); a pad for covering the folded airbag, wherein the pad includes a door (76,

Art Unit: 3616

98; see Figure 4) that is pushed open by the airbag; a switch operating portion (58), wherein the switch operating portion is moved to a non-interfering region by the door when the door opens (see paragraph bridging columns 2 and 3), and in the non-interfering region, the switch operating portion does not interfere with the door when the door is fully open (inherent, as the switch is in the middle of the door, it does not interfere with its opening).

Regarding claim 15, the switch portion pivots about connection 54.

### *Allowable Subject Matter*

6. Claims 16-20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

7. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The prior art fails to show a steering wheel having a switch operation portion that is moved by the airbag to a non-interfering region wherein the switch portion is in an inter-spoke space, wherein the switch portion is lowered and moved, wherein the switch operating portion moves in an elongated mounting hole, or wherein the switch has an upper and lower case and the upper case moves downward with respect to the lower case.

### *Conclusion*

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Lehman shows an airbag cover with a switch that is moved. Igawa also shows a switch that is moved. Leng and Rudolph et al. show switches on steering wheels of interest.

Art Unit: 3616

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David Dunn whose telephone number is 703-305-0049. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thur, alt. Fridays, 9:00-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Dickson can be reached on 703-308-2089. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dunn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Dunn  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3616